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A NOTE ON THE FIRST PERSON PLURAL IN CHIMARIKO

By E. SAPIR

I know of few irrevocable facts in the domain of American linguistics that are quite so regrettable as our scanty knowledge of Chimariko. What attention I have been able to give the Hokan problem has tended to convince me that in Chimariko we possess, or possessed, one of the most archaic languages of the whole group, perhaps the one language in California which came nearest a faithful representation of the theoretical Hokan prototype. As it is, we must make shift to get on with such material as has been spared us and be doubly thankful for the fragmentary data that Dixon was able to secure in 1906 from the one or two aged or half-witted survivors of the tribe¹. The present note will serve to illustrate how unexpected and far-reaching may be the threads that bind Chimariko to geographically remote languages in California.

The first personal pronominal affix for Chimariko verbs always, or nearly always, shows clearly related forms for singular and plural. This will be evident from the following²:

"*tc-*, first person singular. Prefixed or suffixed as subject of intransitive verbs, with adjectival stems. Prefixed as object of transitive verbs.

tca-, *tcw-*, first person plural. Prefixed or suffixed as subject of intransitive verbs, with adjectival stems. This suffix³ is distinguished from singular *tc-* by change of vowel. If the singular has *a* as connecting vowel, the plural

has *o*, and vice-versa. Prefixed as object of transitive verbs.

i-, *y-*, first person singular. Prefixed or suffixed as subject of intransitive verbs, with verbal stems. Prefixed as subject of transitive verbs.

ya-; *we-*, *w-*, first person plural. Prefixed or suffixed as subject of intransitive verbs, with verbal stems. Prefixed (*va-*) as subject of transitive verbs."

Further on Dixon remarks⁴:

"It will be seen that two wholly different forms are given in both singular and plural for the first person. In the use of the one or the other of these, there is a fairly clear distinction in use. The first type, *tc*, is never employed with verbal stems indicating action or movement, but with those, on the contrary, which indicate a state or condition. On the other hand, whereas the second form, *i*, *y*, is invariably used with the former class of verbal stems, it is also employed with the latter, but is then always suffixed. In most cases, there is no confusion between the two forms, i. e., if the first person singular is *i* or *y*, the first person plural is *ya*. A few instances appear, however, in which this does not hold, and we have *i* in the singular, and *tc* or *ts* in the plural. In a limited number of cases also, either form may apparently be used, as *qe'-i-xanan*, *qe'-tce-xanan* I SHALL DIE, *i-saxni*, *tca-saxni* I COUGH [perhaps better understood as stem *asax-*, with *i* displacing *a-* of stem; *tc-* prefixed: *tc-asax-ni*. Cf. *tc-a'wi'n* I FEAR and other singulars in *tc-a-*]. A phonetic basis is to some extent observable,

1. Roland B. Dixon, *The Chimariko Indians and Language* (University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology, vol. 5, pp. 293-380, 1910).

2. Dixon, *op. cit.*, p. 318.

3. Read doubtless "affix".

4. *Op. cit.*, pp. 325, 326.

in that *tc* or *ts* is never a prefix when the verbal stem begins with a vowel. [This seems doubtful.] As between *i* and *y*, it appears that the latter is always used before stems beginning with a vowel except *i*, whereas *i* is employed before stems beginning with *i* or with consonants. [There seems, however, to be some evidence to show that *i-* may displace the initial stem vowel, just as *u* of *tcu-* MY displaces the initial vowel of the noun stem, e. g. *m-isam* THY EAR, *h-isam* HIS EAR, but *tcu-sam* MY EAR.] The first persons singular and plural are distinguished from each other, where the form *tc* is used, only by a change of connecting vowel already pointed out. [Dixon's "connecting vowel", in the verb as in the noun, as is shown by general Hókan comparative evidence, is in all probability either the initial vowel of the stem or a prefixed vowel inhering in the pronominal or other prefixed element.]

"The pronominal elements as given, are, when used as prefixes, attached to the verb by means of connecting vowels. These... often show some relation to the vowel of the verbal stem, but this is noticeable chiefly in the case of *o* and *u* stems. The first person singular and plural are distinguished from each other only by the change in this connecting vowel. As a rule, the first person singular is *tco-* or *tcu-*, whereas the plural is *tca-*. In one or two instances, however, this seems to be reversed."

Forms with combined prefixed pronominal subject and object involving the first person are given by Dixon as follows :

i-: I-THEE, I-HIM, I-YE

ya-: WE-THEE, WE-HIM, WE-YE, WE-THEM ;
HE-US

tcu-, *tca-*: HE-ME, THEY-ME

tca-: HE-US, THEY-US

The material contained in Dixon's paper is hardly sufficient to enable us to unravel all the

details of first person pronominal usage. Much remains uncertain or obscure. It is fairly clear that a number of phonetic laws are operative that Dixon has not succeeded in disentangling ; it is also possible that certain phonetic niceties not explicitly taken into account, particularly vocalic quantity, may be significant. Thus, it is observable that verb stems in *a-* with preceding first personal *y-* show a *ye-* in the first person singular, *ya-* in the first person plural ; e. g., from *-ama-* TO EAT : *y-ema* I EAT, *ya-ma* LET US EAT. Apparently, in the singular the *a-* of the stem has been palatalized to *e* by the preceding *y-* ; in the plural the *ya-* of the pronominal prefix has displaced the *a-* of the stem, or the two *a-* vowels have contracted to a single vowel that ordinarily resists palatalization. It seems more likely that the *-a-* of *ya-* and *tca-* regularly displace initial stem vowels. The simplest statement of the facts that it seems possible to formulate is as follows :

	Sing.	Plur.
Subjective (i. e. subject of active verb)	<i>y-</i> (before vowels) <i>i-</i> (before consonants)	<i>ya-</i>
Objective (i. e. subject of static verb and object of transitive verb)	<i>-i</i> <i>tcu-</i> (before consonants) <i>tc-</i> (before vowels) ; <i>-tcu-</i> , <i>-tc-</i>	<i>-ya</i> <i>tcu-</i> ; <i>-tca</i>

The vowels of *tcu-* (singular) and of *ya-* and *tca-* (plural) are probably inherent vowels of the prefixes that normally displace initial stem vowels ; *tca-* for *tcu-* and *tco-* for *tca-* are probably secondary phonetic developments due to assimilation, contraction, or elision. The first person plural, then, is formed from the corresponding singular by adding an *-a-* to the *y-* or *tc-* of the singular or by displacing the vowel of the singular *tcu-* by an *-a-*. In other words, the really essential element of the affixed first person plural of Chimariko is *-a-*.

The truth of this is confirmed by certain first person plural forms in *a-* (without preceding *y-* or *tc-*) that are not explicitly discussed

by Dixon but are scattered about in his texts. The verb *-uwam-*, *-owam-* TO GO (*-wam-* appears also as *-wum-*, *-waum-*) regularly appears with "connecting vowel" *-u-*, *-o-*, e. g. :

- y-owa'm-xa-nan* I'LL GO (p. 349, l. 11)
y-uwaum-xa'-nan I SHALL GO (349.5)
y-uwa'u'm-ia I GO (349.2)
m-owa'm-xa-nan YOU SHALL GO (349.14)
h-owa' m-da HE WENT (349.1)
n-u'wam GO ! (349.8 ; *n-* is second person singular imperative)
n-u'wa'um GO BACK ! (351.1)
nu'-g-u'wa'm-na "DON'T GO !" (350.18)

With these forms contrast the following first person plurals :

- a'-wam* LET'S GO (351.9 ; 343.4)
a'-wa'm GO (359.5)
a-wa'm LET'S GO (351.18)
a-wu'm LET'S GO (341.6)
a-wa'm-an WE'LL GO (351.16)
na' tcidut a'-wam WE GO (349.9)
xoko-lɛ'-tce a-wa'm-xa-nan TWO-OF-US WILL-GO 350.17 ; 351.3)
xotai'-re-tce a-wa'm-xa-nan (WE)-THREE WILL-GO (350.15)

Obviously *a-* is here a pronominal element, displacing, as do *ya-* and *tca-*, the initial vowel of the stem. The verb *-uwam-* probably contains a suffixed, perhaps local, *-m-*, as shown by other derivatives of *-uwa-*, e. g. :

- n-u'a-hta* GO (359.6)
m-u'a-dok-ni YOU COME BACK (360.2)

In such verbs also the first person plural is characterized by an *a-* displacing the *u-* of the stem, e. g. :

- a-wa-kda-xa'n* LET'S GO AROUND (341.10 ; 11)

Finally, the negative of the first person plu-

ral, ordinarily *ya-x-*, *tca-x-*, is for the verb *-uwa-* (*m-*) apparently *a-x-*, e. g. :

- a-x-am-gu-tcai'-da-nan* (WE) DON'T WANT TO GO (350.14)

On the basis of Chimariko alone one might surmise that the original form for the first person plural pronominal prefix (perhaps only for the "subjective" series) was *a-* and that the *ya-* (and perhaps also *tca-*) forms arose under the influence of the singular. An original Hokan paradigm for the first person pronominal prefixes :

Sing. *i-* Plur. *a-*

is, indeed, preserved in Salinan¹. The contrast of sing. *i-* (which generally appears in Salinan as *e-*; for Salinan $e < i$ cf. Antoniaño *epa'l* TONGUE, Migueleño *ipal* < Hokan **ipali*, Chimariko *ipen*, Achomawi *ip'li*) : plur. *a-* appears in the independent personal pronoun (Antoniaño *he'k' I*, *ha''k' WE* ; Migueleño *k'e' I*, *k'a' WE*) ; in the prefixed subjective elements (*e-* I, *a-* WE) ; and in the locative pronominal series (*-k'e* TO ME, *-k'a* TO US). The possessive pronominal prefixes are all but analogous. The first person singular is characterized by the absence of a prefix except, in the case of stems with initial vowel, for the prefixed article-like element *t-*, which is not properly a possessive pronominal element ; the corresponding plural has *t-a-*, the article-like *t-* plus the properly pronominal *-a-*, or (before vowels) *t-a-t-*, in which *t-* seems to be used pleonastically. The only pronominal series in Salinan not characterized by a distinctive *a-* in the first person plural is the objective, suffixed to the verb (*-ak* ME ; *-t'ak* US) ; here the plural is derived from the singular by means of the common Salinan

1. See J. A. Mason, *The Language of the Salinan Indians* (University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology, vol. 14, pp. 1-154, 1918).

pluralizing element *-t-* (cf. also *-ka* THEE : *-t'kam* YOU ; *-o*, *-ko* HIM : *-ot*, *-kot* THEM).

It is the series of subjective pronominal prefixes that most closely corresponds to the Chimariko "subjective" series. This is true for all persons, as indicated in the following comparative table :

	Chimariko	Salinan
Sing. 1	<i>y-</i> , <i>i-</i>	<i>e-</i>
2	<i>m-</i>	<i>m-</i>
3	<i>h-</i>	—
Plur. 1	<i>a-</i> ; <i>ya-</i>	<i>a-</i>
2	<i>q-</i>	<i>k-</i> (subject of 2nd per. plur. imperative ¹)
3	<i>h-</i>	—

1. Treated by Mason (p. 41) as a modal (imperative) prefix of the plural, but evidently pronominal, as shown by the parallel use of pronominal *m-* in the imperative of the singular, by the analogy of the Salinan possessive form *t-k-*, *t-uk-*, *t-ko-* YOUR, and by the comparison of other Hokan dialects (besides Chimariko *q-*, *qo-*, *qe-* we have also Yana *-ga* YE). Cf. also Washo *ge-*, imperative prefix ; this is likely to be the old second person plural prefix, generalized for both numbers. The leveling of singular and plural pronominal prefixes is characteristic of Washo. The pronominal analogies of Washo *ge-* have been already pointed out by Kroeber.

As so often in Chimariko, the Salinan pronominal elements of the first person frequently, if not regularly, displace or contract with the initial vowel of the stem or displace the vowel of a preceding element (e. g. *ko-* NOT ; *k-e-* NOT I, *k-a-* NOT WE). Examples of Salinan forms in *e-* and *a-* are :

<i>e-ki</i> AM I GOING ?	<i>a-kiyal</i> ARE WE GOING ?
<i>k-e-cxai'</i> I WOKE UP (<i>'icxai'</i> TO ARISE AT DAWN)	<i>n-a-pala</i> LET US DANCE
<i>k-e-k'a-k'a</i> I WILL NOT SING	<i>k-a-suxtax</i> WE ARE NOT AFRAID
<i>m e-yax</i> WHEN I CAME (<i>iyax</i> TO COME)	<i>m-a-ya</i> WHEN WE GO (<i>iya</i> SEVERAL GO)

Note that *i-* of *iya* TO GO, *iyax* TO COME (for *i-* cf. Washo *iye* TO GO ; for *-x* < *-k'* cf. Chimariko *-uwa-k-* TO COME < *-uwa-*, *-uwa-m-* TO GO and Yana *-k'i-* HITHER, e. g. *ni-sā-* TO GO AWAY, *ni-k'i-* TO COME) is displaced by first person plural pronominal *a-* as in Chimariko (e. g. *ya-milcit-ni* WE KICK, *h-imilcit-ni* HE KICKS ; stem *-imilcit-*, cf. Hokan **imi-* LEG).